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TAGS: PARM PGOV PINR PREL UP
SUBJECT: UKRAINE: OFFER OF MISSILE WARNING COOPERATION MORE
POLITICAL THAN PRACTICAL

Classified By: Charge for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary and Comment: On August 16, Ukraine's MFA announced that Ukraine was ready to develop active cooperation on early warning and missile monitoring systems with "European countries." It also stated that President Yushchenko on August 13 ordered Ukraine's withdrawal from a 1992 missile defense agreement with Russia. This follows Russia's announced withdrawal from the agreement in February ¶2008. The two early warning radars that Ukraine has offered for integration into a wider monitoring system, based in Mukacheve in western Ukraine and Sevastopol in Crimea, are short-to-medium-range tactical systems. The same systems were offered for use to Lt. General Obering, head of the US Missile Defense Agency, during his early 2007 visit to Ukraine -- discussions on this offer are ongoing. Post views the Ukrainian statement, which generated extensive international media coverage, primarily as a political signal (vice military/technical) regarding Ukraine's ongoing hopes for further military cooperation and integration with the West, and as a counter to Russia's negative reaction to the US-Polish Missile Defense agreement. End Summary and Comment.

MFA Announces Readiness to Cooperate

¶2. (C) On August 16, Ukraine's MFA announced publicly that it was ready to develop active cooperation with "European" countries on early warning and missile monitoring systems. (Note: Since at least early 2007, the U.S. and Ukraine privately have been discussing the possibility of using these radars as part of U.S. missile defense. U.S. and Ukrainian experts continue to discuss the capabilities of the radars to assess their potential suitability in a missile detection and tracking system, but no decision has been on whether the U.S. will be interested in using these radars. End Note.) The move, which came out as a presidential decree on August 13, was seen by many as evidence of Yushchenko's desire to move closer to the West on security issues and underlined continuing Ukraine-Russian tensions. It also served as a counterweight to Russia's negative reaction to the bilateral U.S.-Polish Missile Defense agreement. The MFA statement noted that closer cooperation with Europe on missile early warning systems became possible after Russia withdrew from its 1992 missile defense agreement with Ukraine in February ¶2008. According to the MFA statement, the early warning systems in question are located in Mukacheve in western Ukraine and Sevastopol in Crimea.

¶3. (U) The MFA stated that "The Russian Federation's withdrawal from the bilateral agreement between the Russian and Ukrainian governments on early warning and outer space monitoring systems, makes it unfeasible for Ukraine to further participate in the July 6, 1992 treaty." The MFA added that "this will enable Ukraine to establish active cooperation with European countries to integrate Ukrainian

early warning systems with other systems, and possibly other foreign states...." It noted that termination of the agreement will go into effect one year after written notification of withdrawal from the agreement by either side.

(Note: This seems to indicate that the agreement will officially be terminated in February 2009. End note.)

¶4. (C) Many viewed Russia's decision to pull out as a sign of disapproval for Ukraine's application for NATO MAP in the run-up to the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008. However some press accounts reported that Russia decided to transfer early warning functions from Mukacheve and Sevastopol to other locations in Russia because the technical service life of the facilities in Ukraine had expired in ¶2005. MFA NATO Deputy DG Vadym Prystaiko also told Post August 17 that the radar systems, which are now under the control of Ukraine's Space Agency, generated decent "rental" income from Russia, and that the GOU is looking actively for other funding sources.

¶5. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.

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